<u>SAIGA CONVERSION INSTRUCTIONS:</u>

The “magazine” information here is based on the conversion of a Saiga rifle chambered for the 7.62X39 cartridge. The pistol grip conversion applies to all Saiga rifles, while the magazine conversion differs between calibers. This CD contains information for converting the 7.62X39 and .223/5.56 magazines. **If you are working on a .223/5.56 magazine, please refer to the section of the CD entitled “Saiga .223 Cal. High Capacity Magazine Conversion”.**

Saigas can be converted ONLY if enough US parts are installed so as to make it a "domestic" rifle rather than an import. Domestic rifles cannot have more than 10 imported parts, so you have to replace enough imported parts with US ones to get down to imported 10 parts. **It is illegal to do these conversions to Saiga shotguns (except the .410).**

On pistol gripped Saigas, you need 5 US parts.

Non pistol gripped Saigas only need 4 US parts.

The Parts

- US made Fire Control Group and disconnector spring = **only 3 parts** counting as US parts. (Hammer, disconnector and trigger). A single hook trigger will install easily, whereas a double hook trigger will require a little modification to the receiver. (Just a small cut in the receiver).



- US made buttstock and pistol grip = **2 parts** counting as US parts. (now you have enough parts to win the 10 or less game). A dragunov-style stock also works and counts as two parts.





- A pistol grip screw and nut.



- A piece of 3/4" water pipe to make the feed ramp out of, or just buy a feed ramp from www.k-var.com . A k-var feed ramp will have to be modified somewhat. I usually choose to use the k-var ramp.



- 2 small bolts w/nuts--one to fill the hole left by the rivet in front of the stock trigger hole, and one to attach the rear of the trigger guard.

Tools and Supplies

- A dremel tool comes in handy.
- Common household tools like screwdrivers, pliers etc. Nothing fancy is needed.
- Hand held drill or drill press and bits.

- Small amount of refinishing paint.

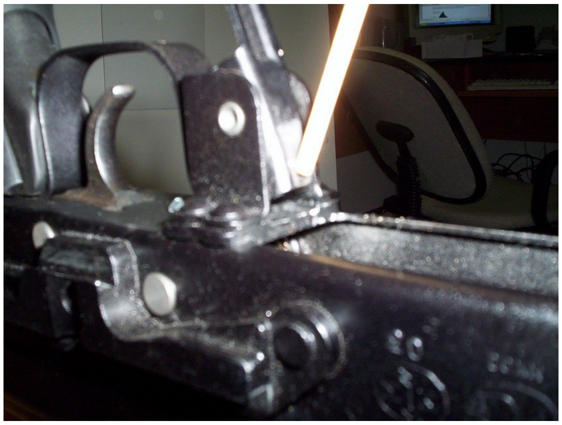
The Process…

Filing the mag catch

You need to take a little bit off the mag catch lever on the rifle for the AK magazines to lock in; the lug on the AK mag is a little bit thicker than the lug on the Saiga mags. Use a file or the flat edge of the cutting disk on the dremel--GO SLOWLY and recheck often (with multiple mags).

You can either file a little bit on all the mags, or just file to mag catch as explained above. Modifying the mag catch is a one step process and saves you from having to file a lot of mags. It isn't likely that you would mess up and file off too much of the mag catch. But if you did, you can just buy a new mag catch from www.k-var.com .

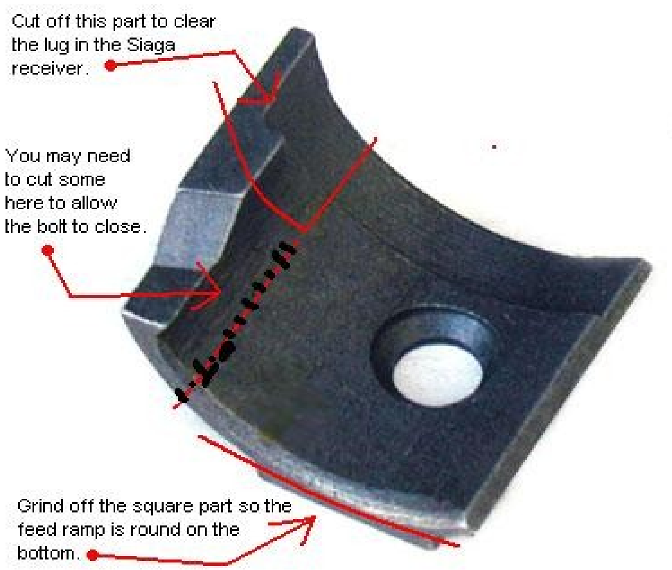
The mag catch…



Filing the mag catch…



The Feed Ramp…

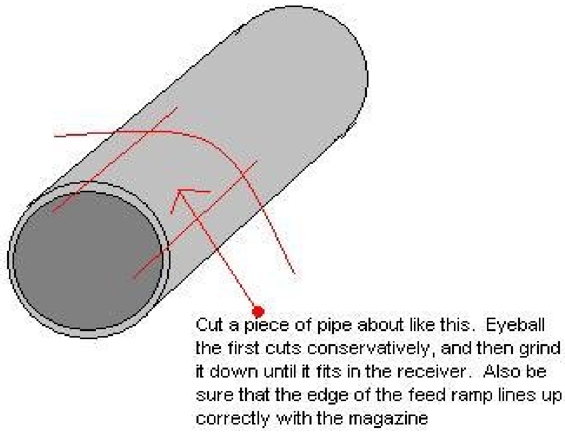


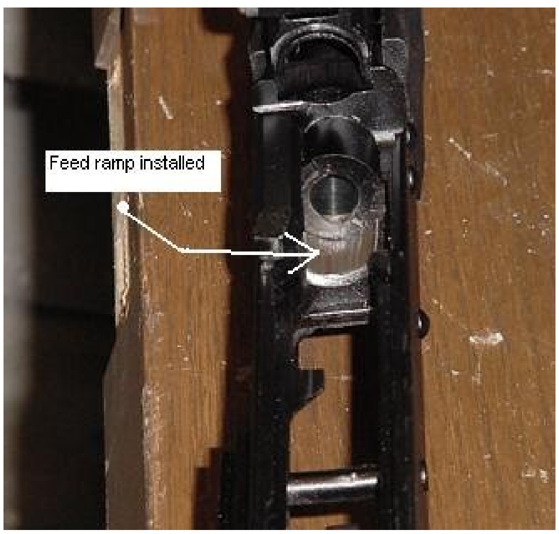
Notice how the feed ramp was cut to fit around the rivet in the Saiga receiver. A hole was drilled and tapped to hold the ramp in place. I used Loctite to make sure the screw doesn't back out.



OR

Make one out of a chunk of pipe. You have to be sure that the bolt can close fully--watch the clearance with the bottom of the bolt and be sure that the bolt has room to fully rotate. I found that using the threaded part of a connector was the easiest because you need the pipe to be a little bit thinner in order for the bolt to close properly.





Set the feed ramp in there (unattached) and check to be sure that the rounds will feed reliably. If possible, actually shoot a few. Once you are sure rounds will load properly, you need to attach the ramp. Welding is easy if you have access to it, or drill and tap a screw. Some people have used JB weld. I am not sure about the long term reliability of the JB Quick Weld method.

Now the magazine portion is done; the rifle is also illegal w/ no US parts.

The rest of the conversion…

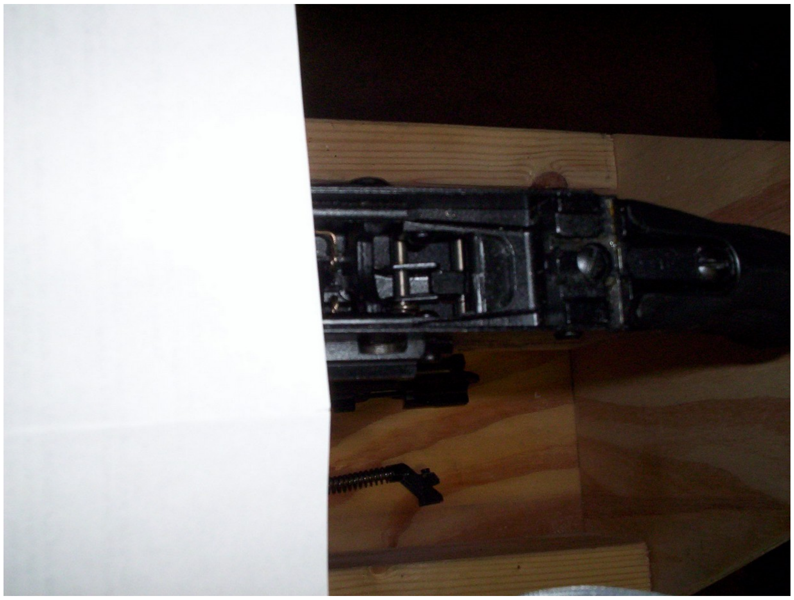
Field strip the rifle. Remove the top cover, spring, charging handle/gas piston, and bolt.

You have to remove the Saiga trigger components. They are not meant to be removed like AK trigger components are. You will need to remove the pins that hold the trigger in place. I use a drill to accomplish this.

Trigger pins… note the two pins just above the trigger. They hold the Saiga trigger in place and must be drilled out.



Trigger pins from inside the receiver…

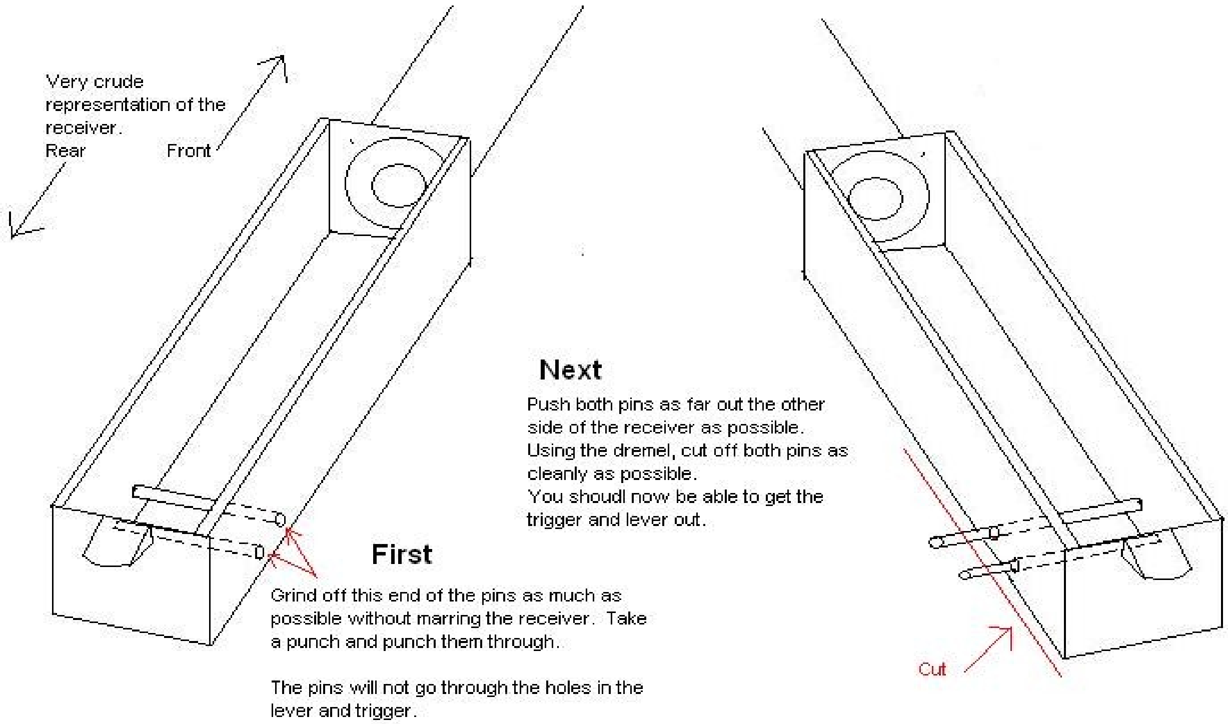


Drilling out the trigger pins…



Drill out both of the pins making sure not to scratch the receiver.
Then the trigger parts will be removable.

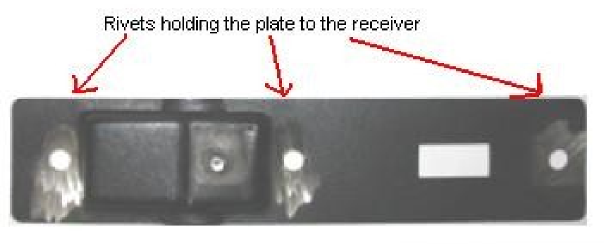
The graphic below shows some more detail of the trigger pins being removed. The graphic recommends grinding the trigger pins, however, I recommend drilling them out to prevent scratching the receiver.



The bottom plate

Grind off the rivets that hold the bottom plate to the receiver (keep the trigger guard intact!) Leave the mag catch alone.

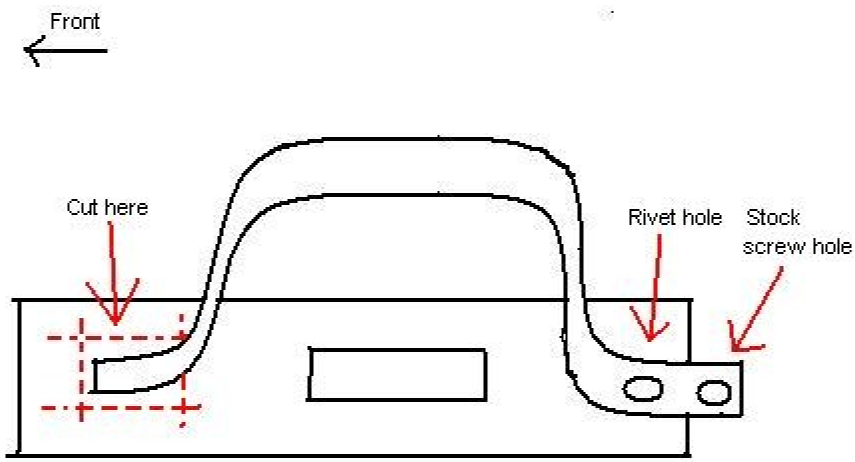
Note: You can either grind off the rivets or drill them out from the inside. I recommend drilling to prevent scratching the receiver.



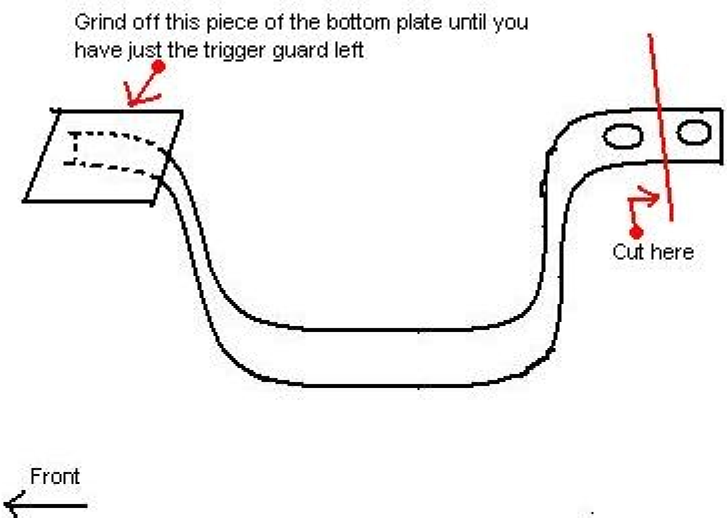
Pry off the bottom plate.

You will want the trigger guard intact, so the best idea is to drill out the weld from the inside of the plate or cut around the welded end of the trigger guard and then grind off the piece of the bottom plate welded to the trigger guard.

The trigger guard…



On the rear of the trigger guard, cut off the hole for the stock screw--leave the hole where the rivet was, you will need this.



On the bottom of the receiver, you will see the hole for a standard AK trigger. You can now test fit the trigger parts. I had to make the hole a little bit bigger so the back of the trigger would clear it.

Once you have the Saiga trigger guard off of the bottom plate you have to bend it a little bit. Stick the front end under the mag catch assembly and bend the guard until the rear hole lines up with the hole just behind the opening for the trigger. You need a small bolt here; be sure that the portion of the bolt inside the receiver does not interfere with anything. It is probably best to mount the bolt with the head inside the receiver since the outside end will be covered by the pistol grip. You still need to attach the front end of the guard under the mag catch. Use locktite or JB Quick Weld on the nut and bolt to keep it from working its way out.



You could also weld the vertical part of the guard directly to the mag catch assembly. That would be similar to a standard AK, but I had no access to welding equipment.
You also need a small bolt the fill the hole from the front rivet of the bottom plate. Again, be sure that the bolt doesn't interfere with the hammer. Probably easiest to simply bolt it in and then cut the bolt off flush with the nut inside the receiver. I slapped a little bit of JB Quick Weld on the inside to be sure it never comes out.

Now you may have to cut a hole for the PG nut. You can see the approximate location in this picture. The newer Saigas already have the pistol grip hole so cutting may not be necessary. However, sometimes the pistol grip nut may be larger than the hole and you may need to open the hole up just a bit.



The hole doesn't have to be perfectly located, but make sure it is centered. Cut the hole conservatively and then slowly enlarge it until the nut barely fits. Test fit it all.

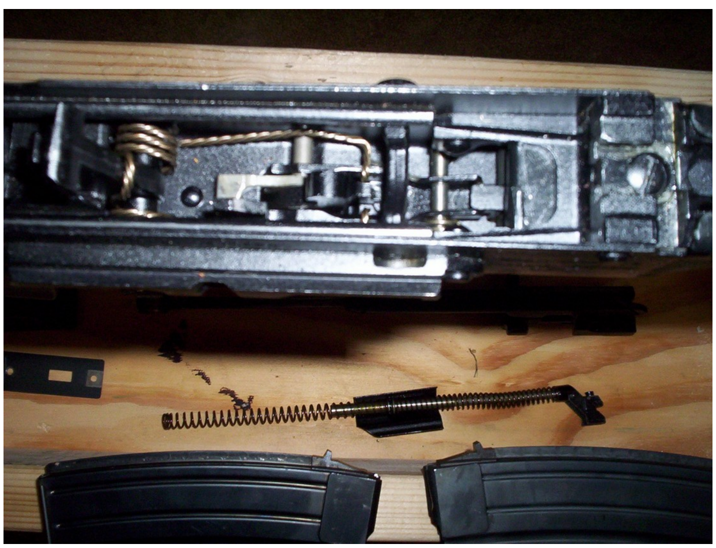
Installing the AK style trigger parts…

The new trigger parts will install just like they do in a standard AK now. The trigger and disconnector will both ride on the pin that the Saiga disconnector was on. The new US made hammer will ride on the same pin the Saiga hammer was on.

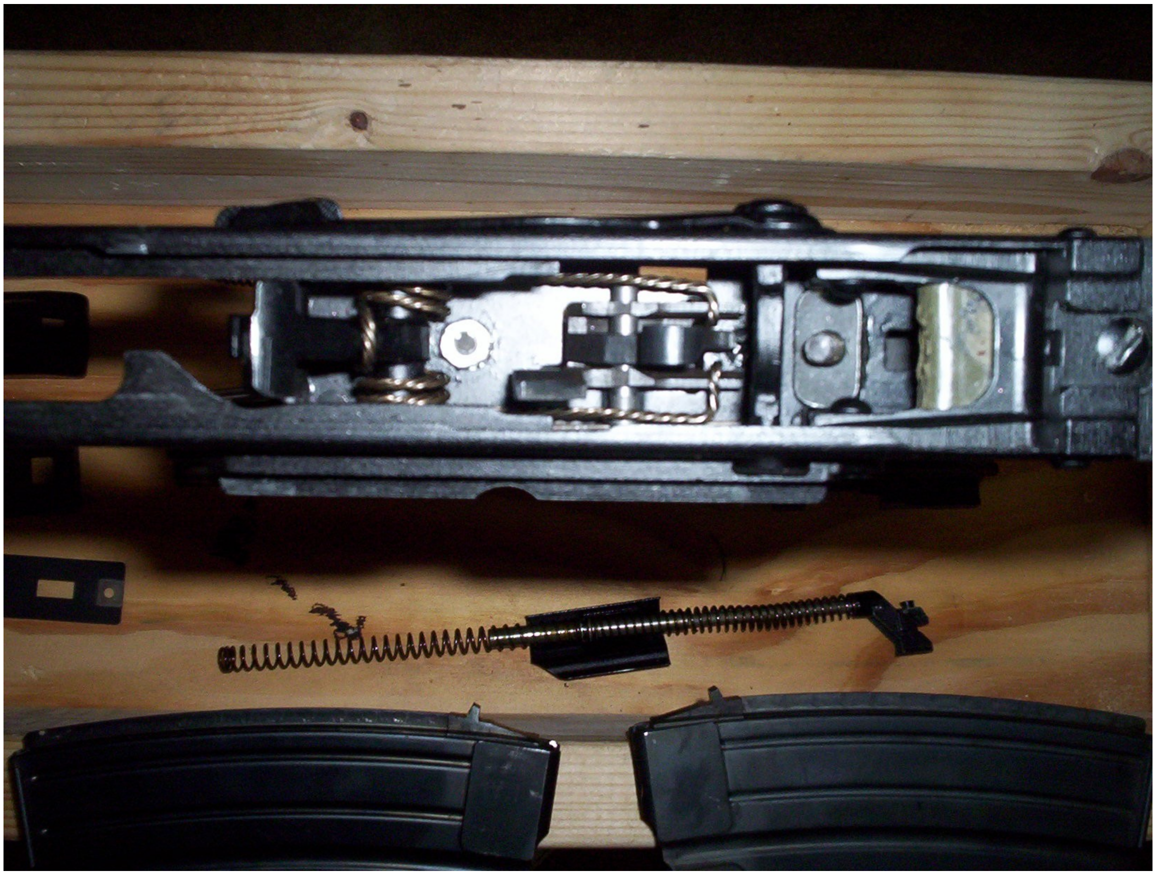
Old, Saiga disconnector…



Before conversion…



After conversion…



The trigger assembly goes together like this…

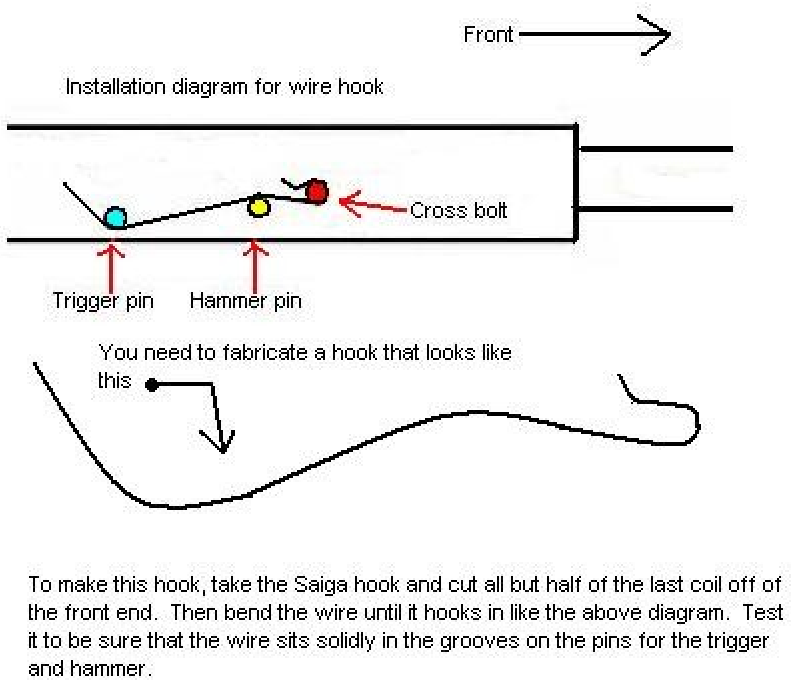


The disconnector spring goes in like this…



Wire retaining hook

You need to modify the wire hook from the Saiga to work with the standard AK setup. The following diagram shows how.



Test fit the trigger parts again. Make sure the hook keeps the pins in place.

Or

You can just buy a new AK retaining hook from www.k-var.com



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Leftover holes from drilled-out pins

You still have 2 holes on each side of the receiver from the pins you drilled out. You can braze over them and grind them flat, put bolts in

them, or cut small pieces of the bottom plate to cover each set of holes. I just put some nice looking rivets in the holes.

Adding the buttstock…

The buttstock may or may not need a bit of shaping in order to fit into the receiver. You may need to sand it some for clearance. This can be played by ear. Since I have some large rivets in this rifle I had to cut the stock like this…



Painting

Remove all grease and oil. Even the oil from your hands can keep the paint from adhering properly. Some people use high temperature engine paint or a product called Gunkote which requires baking the rifle after application. Gunkote is a product designed for firearms, but I have had excellent results with SEM Self-Etching Primer (black), and SEM Trim Black. The self-etching primer has an acid ingredient which bonds to metal very well chemically. It comes in grey and black. The "Trim Black" is just a color that I happened to find which matches the Saiga finish very well. These products can be found at any automotive paint stores that carry the SEM brand.



Saiga .223



The whole process sounds complicated, but really isn't. The conversions do take some time, but I do them at home with no special tools. This was my first gunsmithing project of any kind and I managed to do it fairly easily.

EDIT: Since this was written I have performed this conversion on several versions of the Saiga rifles. Getting the Saiga parts out is the

hardest part, the reassembly is much easier. It just gets easier every time you do it! Gotta love the Saigas!